

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-07 SAJ-01 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 AID-05
IGA-02 /092 W
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R 281525Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7205
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION NATO
EC BRUSSELS 308
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0123

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, FR, IT, MT
SUBJECT: FRENCH/ITALIAN APPROACH ON MALTA

REF: PARIS 0244, VALLETTA 0096,

1. I TALKED YESTERDAY WITH MY FRENCH COLLEAGUE GELADE,
NEWLY ARRIVED, AND AGAIN WITH DA-RIN TODAY ON STATUS
OF FRENCH/ITALIAN APPROACH TO MINTOFF.

2. GELADE, AS PARIS ALERTED US, DOES NOT SUGGEST BY
HIS MANNER THAT HE IS ALL THAT HAPPY TO BE HERE, BUT
WITH A NICE FRENCH FLOURISH OF HIS ARMS, INDICATED IN
ANY EVENT HE WAS HERE. I TOLD HIM OF BLOT'S APPROACH
TO US IN PARIS. HE ASSUMED BLOT ACCURATELY REFLECTS
FRENCH POLICY, BUT UNTIL THIS WAS BLESSED BY HIGHER
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LEVELS GELADE SAID THERE WAS NO FRENCH POLICY TOWARD MALTA.

3. GELADE ASSUMES THE FRENCH/ITALIAN APPROACH WOULD
BE ONE OF GENERAL SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE FOR MINTOFF'S
PROPOSALS, BUT WOULD THEN GO ON FROM THERE TO PROBE FOR
FURTHER INFORMATION BEFORE MAKING ANY COMMITMENTS. THEY
WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE SPEAKING FOR ALL OF THE NINE IN

THE FIRST INSTANCE SINCE, AS THE FRENCH SEE IT, THE NEUTRALITY PORTION OF MINTOFF'S PROPOSALS WOULD NATURALLY INVOLVE A MEDITERRANEAN GROUP WHEREAS THE ECONOMIC PORTION SHOULD AND MUST BE BROADER, INCLUDING PARTICULARLY THE GERMANS.

4. WITH RESPECT TO NEUTRALITY IDEA, THE GOM WOULD OBVIOUSLY FIRST NEED TO DECLARE IN SOME WAY A POLICY OF NEUTRALITY SINCE NO ONE ELSE COULD DO IT FOR THEM. THEN IT COULD PERHAPS BE RECOGNIZED IN SOME WAY BY OTHER COUNTRIES, POSSIBLY IN SERIES OF BILATERAL EXPRESSIONS OF POLICY BUT WITHIN A KIND OF MULTILATERAL CONSENSUS NOT NECESSARILY FORMALLY EXPRESSED. BUT THERE WERE SEVERAL MAJOR QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED BEFORE REACHING THAT POINT; E.G. HOW WOULD THE NEUTRALITY DECLARATION AFFECT CERTAIN AREAS OF GOM POLICY, INCLUDING TERRITORIAL WATERS, CONTINENTAL SHELF AND FIR, AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, WHAT WOULD SUCH A DECLARATION MEAN IN TERMS OF ACCESS BY OUTSIDE POWERS TO MALTA'S PORT FACILITIES. WOULD IT MEAN THAT THESE FACILITIES WERE AVAILABLE TO ACCESS BY ANY AND ALL POWERS, INCLUDING THE US AND SOVIETS, OR WOULD IT MEAN THAT THESE FACILITIES WERE OPEN TO NEITHER OF SUCH POWERS. AND WHAT ABOUT MALTESE POLICY GENERALLY TOWARD THE SOVIETS?

5. GELADE CONFIRMED WHAT BLOT HAD SAID ABOUT FRENCH PREFERENCE TO INVOLVE NORTH AFRICAN STATES SUCH AS ALGERIA AND LIBYA IN SOME FASHION IN ORDER TO GET THEM ENGAGED CONSTRUCTIVELY WITH EUROPEAN MEDITERRANEAN POWERS. CONFIDENTIAL

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6. GELADE WAS NOT SURE MINTOFF WOULD BE VERY PLEASED WITH THIS FIRST APPROACH, SINCE HE WILL BE IMPATIENT WITH ANY DELAY AND ALSO BECAUSE FRANCE AS AN INTERLOCUTOR WOULD NOT BE VERY POPULAR WITH MINTOFF BECAUSE OF PREVIOUS FRENCH POSTURE ON MALTESE/EC RELATIONS.

7. I REVIEWED OUR OWN POLICY AS I HAD DESCRIBED IT IN GENERAL TERMS TO MINTOFF. I SAID THAT WHILE I WAS UNDER SOME LIMITATION IN THE EXTENT TO WHICH I COULD SPEAK FOR A NEW ADMINISTRATION I BELIEVED IT WOULD CONTINUE TO BE US POLICY TO ENCOURAGE WEST EUROPEANS TO TAKE THE LEAD AND THAT WE THOUGHT IT WISE AND DESIRABLE THAT UNTIL THOSE DISCUSSIONS HAD PRODUCED MORE SPECIFICITY IN MINTOFF'S PROPOSALS WE SHOULD REMAIN IN BACKGROUND. WE WOULD NOT EXCLUDE INVOLVING OURSELVES LATER, EVEN WITH ASSISTANCE OF SOME SORT BUT GENERALLY WE FELT US SUPPORT COULD BEST BE PROVIDED THROUGH PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN VIABLE PROJECTS WHICH I CONCEDED WERE STILL SCARCE, IN PART BECAUSE OF

GOM POLICY. I NOTED THAT THE ISSUE OF OCCASIONAL 6TH FLEET ACCESS HAD BEEN BROACHED BY ELLSWORTH, BUT THAT FOR PRESENT WE INTENDED TO LEAVE THIS ON THE TABLE WITHOUT FURTHER INITIATIVE. IN RESPONSE TO GELADE'S QUERY, I SAID MY PERSONAL VIEW WAS THAT WE WOULD PREFER THE PRESENT SITUATION TO ONE IN WHICH MALTA'S FACILITIES WOULD BE OPEN TO BOTH THE US AND SOVIETS. HE SAID HE CONCURRED. WE BOTH SPECULATED, HOWEVER, A MORE LIKELY OUTCOME MIGHT BE ONE IN WHICH MINTOFF TRIES TO GET THE BEST OUT OF ACCESS BY BOTH.

8. I HAVE NOW (TODAY) HEARD FROM DA-RIN THAT AGREED FRENCH/ITALIAN APPROACH IS NOW IN HAND AND THEY ARE INFORMING MINTOFF THEY READY TO TALK. APPROACH WILL BE ALONG ABOVE LINES; E.G., GENERAL EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE, HEAVY EMPHASIS ON QUESTIONS, AND PREFERENCE TO DEVELOP SOME KIND OF AGREED POLITICAL FRAMEWORK BEFORE GETTING INTO ASSISTANCE DISCUSSIONS. LAINGEN
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Message Attributes

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